REMARKS

Entry of the above amendments and reconsideration of this application are respectfully requested. Upon entry of the amendments, this application will contain claims 1-45 pending and under consideration. The amendments are fully supported by the specification and introduce no new subject matter.

Claims 1-45 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a). In support of this rejection, the Office Action states that these claims are not patentable over Khosravi et al. (5,618,299) in view of Hiles et al. (WO 98/25543). In support of this rejection, the Office Action states that it would be obvious to use the submucosa material taught by Hiles et al. to prepare a tubular medical device as disclosed in Khosravi et al. To the extent maintained, it is submitted that this rejection would be in error for the following reasons.

As to claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-15, claim 1 now requires that the extension "has a width greater than the maximum width of said aperture, and is foldable for receipt through said aperture", in combination with the other claimed features. Khosravi et al. has protrusions that are narrower than the maximum width of the corresponding apertures, and does not suggest any other arrangement. Hiles et al. does not help in this regard. Accordingly, the combination of references clearly fails to suggest the claimed structure.

As to claim 16 and its dependent claims 17-25, claim 16 requires "a compliant, sealed tube, configured as a leak-resistant

vessel graft", in combination with the other recited features. Constructing a device of Khosravi et al. with the materials of Hiles et al. would clearly not achieve such claimed features. The stents of Khosravi et al. are not designed as vessel grafts and they are riddled with holes. Accordingly, maintenance of the rejection against claim 16 and dependent claims 17-25 would also be in error.

As to claim 26 and its dependent claims 27-29, claim 26 requires steps of "engaging the at least one extension with the at least one aperture, wherein said engaging includes positioning a portion of the at least one extension through the at least one aperture so as to position said portion overlapping an underlying layer of the collagenous biocompatible material, wherein a surface of said portion conforms to the underlying layer of the collagenous biomaterial" and "bonding the surface of said portion to the underlying layer of collagenous biocompatible material". Constructing a device of Khosravi et al. with the materials of Hiles et al. would clearly not achieve such claimed features. The protrusions of the structures of Khosravi et al. extending through the apertures are not conformed and bonded to the underlying material. Accordingly, maintenance of the rejection against claim 26 and dependent claims 27-29 would be in error.

As to claim 30, it requires "a sealed collagenous tube configured as a leak-resistant vessel graft" in combination with the other claimed features. Constructing a device of Khosravi et al. with the materials of Hiles et al. would clearly not achieve such claimed features. The stents of Khosravi et al. are not designed as vessel grafts and they are riddled with holes.

Accordingly, maintenance of the rejection against claim 30 would be in error.

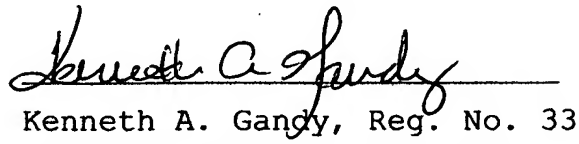
As to claim 31 and its dependent claims 32-41, claim 31 requires "a compliant, sealed tube formed from a sheet of biomaterial comprising submucosal tissue, the tube having a lumen having a lumen wall and configured as a leak-resistant vessel graft" in combination with the other recited features. Constructing a device of Khosravi et al. with the material of Hiles et al. would clearly not achieve such claimed features. The stents of Khosravi et al. are not designed as vessel grafts and they are riddled with holes. Accordingly, maintenance of the rejection against claims 31-41 would be in error.

As to claim 42 and its dependent claims 43-45, claim 42 requires "a compliant, sealed tube formed with a sheet of collagenous biomaterial, the tube having a lumen and configured as a leak-resistant vessel graft" in combination with the other claimed features. Constructing a device of Khosravi et al. with the material of Hiles et al. would clearly not achieve such claimed features. The stents of Khosravi et al. are not designed as vessel grafts and they are riddled with holes. Accordingly, maintenance of the rejection against claims 42-45 would be in error.

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that this application is in condition for allowance containing claims 1-45. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned attorney if there are questions about this submission or other matters that

may be handled in that fashion to expedite the present prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

By: 

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